

17. Asphyxiation

A **47-year-old** co-owner of a restaurant business died when he became locked in a walk-in cooler containing a large amount of dry ice. Electrical power on a Friday evening was lost to the building complex where the business was located. Between 400 and 500 pounds of dry ice was purchased to prevent the loss of food in the cooler. The dry ice was placed in the cooler around midnight. On Sunday afternoon, the electrical power was restored to the building and the victim entered the business Sunday night to determine if the food had been saved. When he entered the walk-in cooler, the door closed behind him and locked. The inside lock-release mechanism was broken and had been missing for an extended period of time. The hole in which the release shaft should have been located was filled with putty to prevent loss of cold air; the release mechanism was on a shelf outside the cooler. The victim was unable to exit the cooler and was discovered on Monday morning. He had succumbed to the high levels of carbon dioxide in the cooler from sublimation of the dry ice.

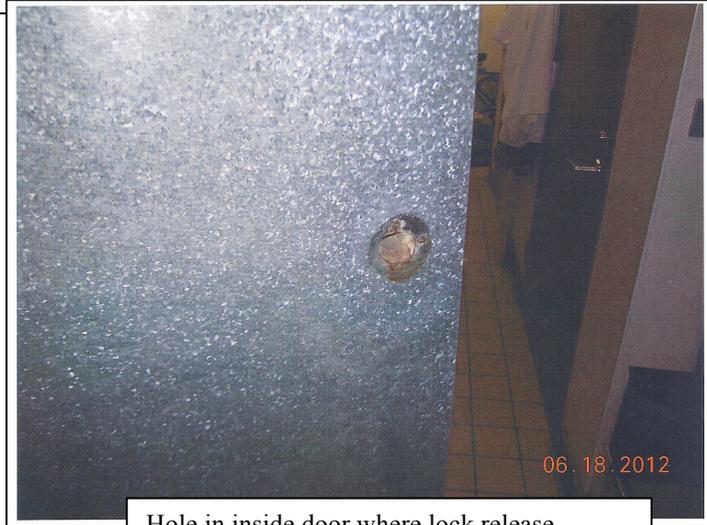
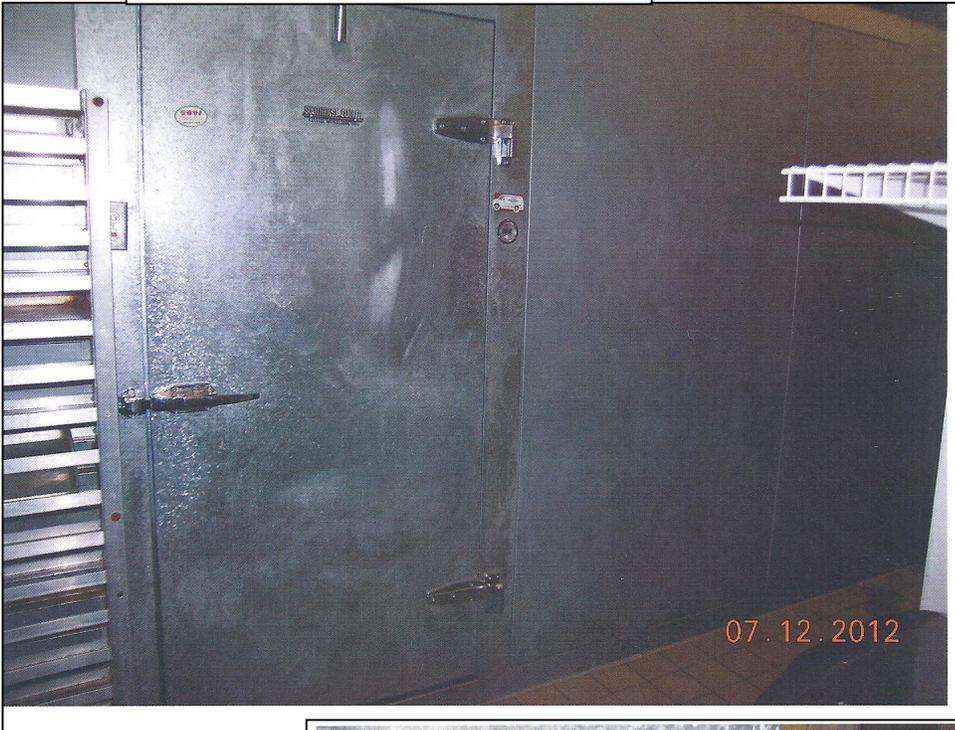
Citations as Originally Issued

Citation 1

Item 1a T.C.A. 50-3-105(1)	The employer did not furnish employment and a place of employment which were free from recognized hazards that were causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.
Item 1b 0800-1-1-.07(2)(b)(1)	Employees were exposed to an airborne concentration of carbon dioxide listed in Table Z1-A in excess of 30,000 ppm as a 15-minute Short Term Exposure Limit.
Item 1c 1910.1200(e)(1)	The employer did not develop and implement a written hazard communication program.
Item 1d 1910.1200(g)(1)	The employer did not have a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical which they used.
Item 1e 1910.1200(h)(1)	Employees were not provided information and training on the hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new hazard was introduced.

See Photos on Next Page

Door to the cooler. Victim was found inside.



Hole in inside door where lock release should have been